

Message Text

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SUBJECT: SUMMER TRIALS

REF: ATHENS 3815

1. MINISTER OF JUSTICE STEPHANAKIS ANNOUNCED JUNE 14 THAT
THE TWENTY-FOUR APRIL 21 MILITARY COUP LEADERS AND THOSE
CHARGED WITH TORTURE DURING THE JUNTA PERIOD (15 PERSONS ARE
HELD ON PRE-TRIAL DETENTION, ABOUT 300 SUITS HAVE BEEN SUBMITTED
AGAINST THEM AND OTHERS) WOULD BE BROUGHT TO TRIAL IN ATHENS DURING
THE SUMMER. THE 104 CIVILIANS WHO SERVED DURING THE JUNTA PERIOD
AS MINISTERS AND HIGH OFFICIALS STILL AWAIT A SUPREME COURT
DECISION ON THEIR CLUPABILITY.

2. IN A SEPARATE DEVELOPMENT OVER THE WEEKEND, FORMER PRIME
MINISTER MARKEZINIS, WHO IS CHARGED WITH MORAL RESPONSIBILITY
IN THE 1973 POLYTECHNION DEATHS AND RELATED INCIDENTS, APPEARED
BEFORE THE INVESTIGATING MAGISTRATE AND ASKED FOR A DELAY OF AT
LEAST ONE WEEK TO PREPARE HIS PLEA. HIS TESTIMONY WILL BE
FOLLOWED BY THAT OF FORMER PRESIDENT PAPADOPOULOS AND THIS WILL
CLOSE THE PRE-INVESTIGATION PHASE ON THE POLYTECHNION AFFAIR.
CHARGES AND THE DATE OF TRIAL WILL BE ANNOUNCED AFTER THE
COUNCIL OF APPEALS COURT JUDGES REVIEWS THE CASE AND DECIDES
ON FURTHER ACTION.

3. ANOTHER PENDING TRIAL IS THAT OF THE 39 OFFICERS, INCLUDING
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DIMITRIOS IOANNIDIS, EX-STRONGMAN OF THE NOVEMBER 25, 1973

MILITARY GOVERNMENT, AND DIMITRIOS PAPAPOSTOLOU, HIS DEPUTY, WHO IS ALSO ACCUSED OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE FEBRUARY 24, 1975 CONSPIRACY AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT AND INSURGENCY. THIS TRIAL, ACCORDING TO PRESS SOURCES, MAY COMMENCE BEFORE THE END OF JUNE.

4. STILL ANOTHER LEGAL CASE WHICH HAS BEEN DELAYED, PROBABLY UNTIL LATER THIS SUMMER, IS THAT OF OFFICIALS CHARGED WITH THE JULY 1974 CYPRUS COUP. OPPOSITION LEADERS, INCLUDING PAPANDREOU, HAD INITIALLY AGREED LAST MARCH TO POSTPONEMENT OF THIS TRIAL, HOWEVER, PAPANDREOU HAS RECENTLY INDICATED THAT HE WILL NOT GO ALONG WITH FURTHER DELAY BEYOND JULY 23, 1975 (ANNIVERSARY OF THE COUP).

5. COMMENT: NEWSPAPERS GIVING CONSIDERABLE PLAY TO DEVELOPMENTS RELATING TO THE ABOVE PROCEEDINGS, AND OTHERS SUCH AS THE FAMOUS MEAT SCHANDALS. SINCE IT IS LIKELY TRIALS THEMSELVES MAY STIR POPULAR EMOTIONS, GOVERNMENT PROBABLY ANTICIPATES IT CAN BEST HANDLE POSSIBLE PUBLIC REACTION DURING SUMMER LULL WHEN PARLIAMENT LIKELY TO BE IN RECESS AND ATHENIANS ARE ESCAPING TO BEACHES. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS ATHENS POLICE HAVE BEEN ASKED TO AVOID VACATIONS DURING AUGUST.

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